Ok Schlesinger - "Robert Kennedy"

Robert walked downstairs, put his head in the living room and told Morgenthau, "He's dead."

Robert Kennedy: "So then Hoover called . . . I don't remember what [his words] were. . . . He was not a very warm or sympathetic figure." William Manchester later asked him whether Hoover sounded excited. "No, not a bit. No, nor upset . . . not quite as excited as if he was reporting the fact that he found a Communist on the faculty of Howard University." * There were many calls.

> I think I called Teddy, and then John McCone called me and said, "I'll come out," and he came out. . . . I called Teddy and all my sisters, and I tried to get hold of Jean, and she wasn't there. . . . But I talked to Steve or talked to somebody to tell her to come down to Washington to stay with Jackie. . . . I talked to Sarge about trying to organize the funeral arrangements and he took charge of that and did a terrific job. I talked to Teddy and asked him to go up to tell my father and my mother. . . . I talked to my mother and we agreed to wait—not telling my father until the next morning. . . . I talked to Eunice and . . . she decided that she would go up to my mother. She's the closest really to my mother so that made sense. Jean was closest to Jackie so that made sense. . . . I had to stay here, so Teddy went up to tell my father.

John McCone arrived; the CIA was a short distance from Hickory Hill. Kennedy and McCone went out to the lawn. In a moment Lyndon Johnson was on the phone. Kennedy took the call by the pool.

> First he expressed his condolences. Then he said . . . this might be part of a worldwide plot, which I didn't understand, and he said a lot of people down here think I should be sworn in right away. Do you have any objection to it? And—well, I was sort of taken aback at the moment because it was just an hour after . . . the President had been shot and I didn't think—see what the rush was. And I thought, I suppose at the time, at least, I thought it would be nice if the President came back to Washington—President Kennedy. . . . But I suppose that was all personal. . . . He said, who could swear me in? I said I'd be glad to find out and I'll call you back.

He called Katzenbach, who said anyone could do it, including a district court judge. "So I called Johnson back and said anybody can."*

Dean Markham, Robert's football friend, arrived. David Hackett was soon there, and Byron White, and Edwin Guthman, and others. "How are you doing?" Kennedy said to Guthman. "I've seen better days," Guthman replied. "Don't be so gloomy," said Kennedy. "That's one thing I don't need now." "There's so much bitterness," he soon said as he paced the lawn with Guthman. "I thought they'd get one of us, but Jack, after all he'd been through, never worried about it. . . . I thought it would be me." [24]

Ethel left to pick up the children at their schools and break the dreadful news. Robert walked back and forth between the tennis court and the swimming pool. Brumus trailed along at his heels. The children came, and he embraced them, comforting them as he had tried to comfort his friends. He told them, "He had the most wonderful life." He seemed controlled. But Ethel, noticing his eyes rimmed with red, handed him a pair of dark glasses and joined his restless walk. As the shadows lengthened, he prepared to drive to the Pentagon. From there he would go by helicopter to Andrews Field and meet his brother's body. On the elevator to McNamara's office he said to Guthman, "People just don't realize how conservative Lyndon really is. There are going to be a lot of changes." [25]

He did not want a crowd at Andrews. He told Sargent Shriver, "The last thing that Jackie, everybody wants [is] to see a lot of—I wasn't very realistic about it. . . . [Justice] Arthur Goldberg got on the phone and said that this was something more than personal, this is the President of the United States, and I think we should all go. And I said, if you want to go, go. I wasn't going to get into an argument about it. So they all came. I didn't see them, but they were all there, and it was nice."

He arrived at Andrews half an hour before the plane was due from Dallas. He took a solitary walk in the enveloping night. "There were all those people out there, and I didn't want to see any people." He sat for a few minutes in the back of an Army truck. Then he made arrangements to get on the plane without running the gantlet of television

* Howard University was the black university in Washington, D.C. Conceivably Hoover might have said Harvard University. In either case, it was one of Hoover's pet hates.

* In fact this discussion was supererogatory. Johnson became President on his predecessor's death, not on the administration of the oath. As Van Buren said long ago, "The Presidency under our system like the king in a monarchy, never dies" (Martin Van Buren, *Inquiry into the Origin and Course of Political Parties in the United States* [New York, 1867], 290).

cameras. "As the plane came in, I walked around. I don't think anybody saw me, and I went up where the pilot is—the front entrance. And everybody's eyes were on the back entrance." He boarded the plane by himself, hurried past the Johnson party and hugged Jackie.

They went to Bethesda Hospital. There were so many details. The funeral home wanted to know how grand the coffin should be. "I was influenced by . . . that girl's book on [burial] expenses . . . Jessica Mitford [*The American Way of Death*]. . . . I remember making the decision based on Jessica Mitford's book. . . . I remember thinking about it afterward, about whether I was cheap or what I was, and I remembered thinking about how difficult it must be for everybody making that kind of decision." Jessica Mitford's sister, in the circularity of life and death, was the sister-in-law of Kathleen Kennedy's husband Billy Hartington.

The question arose whether the coffin should be open or closed. The casket arrived at the White House early in the morning of the twenty-third. After a brief service in the East Room, "I asked everybody to leave and I asked them to open it. . . . When I saw it, I'd made my mind up. I didn't want it open and I think I might have talked to somebody to ask them to look also." He had indeed asked McNamara to come into the East Room. "After a time," I recorded in my journal, "he came out and asked Nancy Tuckerman [Jacqueline Kennedy's social secretary] and me to go in, look at the bier and give our opinion whether the casket should be open or shut. And so I went in, with the candles fitfully burning, three priests on their knees praying in the background. . . . For a moment, I was shattered. But . . . it was too waxen, too made up. It did not really look like him. Nancy and I told this to Bobby and voted to keep the casket closed. When Bill Walton agreed, Bobby gave instructions." [26]

He spent the night in the Lincoln bedroom. Charles Spalding went with him and said, "There's a sleeping pill around somewhere." Spalding found a pill. Robert Kennedy said, "God, it's so awful. Everything was really beginning to run so well." He was still controlled. Spalding closed the door. "Then I just heard him break down. . . . I heard him sob and say, 'Why, God?' " [27]

IV

He lay fitfully for an hour or two. Soon it was daylight. He walked down the hall and came in on Jacqueline, sitting on

her bed in a dressing gown, talking to the children. Young John Kennedy said that a bad man had shot his father. His older sister, Caroline, said that Daddy was too big for his coffin. Later in the morning "there was a dispute about where the President would be buried. . . . Kenny [O'Donnell] and Larry [O'Brien] and Dave Powers were all for him going to Boston, and I was for him being buried out here. . . . They were rather strong. So that made it rather difficult for me. . . . They were going either to turn the Boston Common over and build something in the middle or . . . they were going to set some other place aside . . . but I said the place . . . in Boston that he was going to be buried, where Patrick [the baby who died at birth a few months before] was buried, was unsatisfactory." In the afternoon he met Robert McNamara at Arlington Cemetery. It was raining "like hell." They looked first at a site toward the bottom of the hill, next to Oliver Wendell Holmes. "I said that it would make a major difference if we could have it higher." [28]

He went to the services at the Rotunda of the Capitol. Maude Shaw, the governess, had made John wear gloves. Robert told him to take them off. In the limousine Jackie said, "Where are John's gloves?" Robert said that boys didn't wear gloves. They looked out the car's windows. "That was the first time I saw that horse"—Blackjack, the great, black, restless funeral horse. "That was what really kept your mind off it. You didn't know whether he was going to run away. . . . I was so nervous about the fellow who was holding him. . . . It was nice as you look back on it that he was so restless." He listened to the speeches. "I thought they were nice; just [Mike] Mansfield's such a nice man, liked the President so much. I didn't care much what he said. I thought . . . the repetitious business . . . was awkward. And [Chief Justice] Warren, I thought, was inappropriate, to talk about hate." [29]

Then the funeral. He put his PT-boat tie clip, a silver rosary Ethel had given him and a cutting of his hair into the coffin.[30] I wrote in my journal, "The ceremony at Arlington, against a background of wildly twittering birds, was solemn and heartrending. De Gaulle was there, and Eisenhower, and Truman, looking shattered. Evelyn Lincoln said to me, 'The thing he hated most of all was fanatics.' The day was sunny, crisp and cold. I have never felt so depressed." [31] Robert Kennedy sent a letter to each of his

From Schlesinger, Robert Kennedy

This is merely another of the disproofs of the wild and irresponsible thoerizing because for his kidnapping of the corpse part of his fabrication to begin to be tenable Robert Kennedy has to have been party to it from this account of the speed wit which he reached that part of the plane.